

## AP European History - DBQ

Directions: *This lesson will walk you through the steps of analyzing documents and writing a document-based essay. This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. You may refer to historical facts and developments not mentioned in the documents and assess the reliability of the documents as historical sources where relevant to your answer. In constructing your answer DO NOT simply summarize, paraphrase, or repeat the contents of the documents; instead use the documents in a historical context and draw conclusions from them. You will eventually construct a coherent essay that integrates the analysis of documents into a treatment of the topic.*

### The Question

*Using a majority of the following documents, identify and analyze at least three major reasons for the persecution of individuals as witches in Europe from the late fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries.*

Historical setting: The witch craze lasted from about 1480 to 1700. This was the period of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the consolidation of national governments. Witches were persecuted in most of Europe, but the trials were concentrated in southwestern Germany, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Poland, and parts of France. The total number of accused witches who were tried exceeded 100,000. Torture was used to extract confessions in many areas, but not in others; in England the trials were generally conducted without the use of torture.

### **Document 1**

"Presently he cryeth out of some poor innocent neighbor that he or she hath bewitched him. For, saith he, such an old man or woman came lately to my door and desired some relief, and I denied it, and God forgive me, my heart did rise against her . . . and presently my child, my wife, myself, my horse, my cow, my sheep, my sow, my hog, my dog, my cat, or somewhat, was thus and thus handled in such a strange manner, as I dare swear she is a witch, or else how should these things be"

Thomas Ady, describing the feelings of an English householder, circa 1650

### **Document 2**

"There is one Alice Prabury in our parish that useth herself suspiciously in the likelihood of a witch, taking upon her not only to help Christian people of diseases strangely happened, but also horses and all other beasts. She taketh upon her to help by the way of charming, and in such ways that she will tell nobody her sayings. "

Report of Churchwardens in Gloucestershire, England, 1563

### Document 3

"Innocent have I come into prison, Innocent have I been tortured, Innocent must I die. For whoever comes into the witch prison must become a witch or be tortured until he invents something out of his head and- God pity him- bethinks him of something .... When at test (the executioner) led me back into the prison he said to me, 'Sir, I beg you, for God's sake confess something, whether it be true or not. Invent something, for you cannot endure the torture which you will be put to; and, even if you bear it all, yet you will not escape, not even if you are an earl, but one torture will follow another until you say you are a witch . . . as you may see by all their trials, for one is just like another. . . . ' Dear child, keep this letter secret so that people do not find it.... Good night, for your father Johannes Junius will never see you more."

Letter of Johannes Junius, the mayor of Bamberg, Germany, to his daughter 1628

### Document 4

"It has recently come to our ears, not without great pain to us, that . . . many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the Catholic faith, give themselves over to devils male and female.... We therefore, desiring, as is our duty . . . to remove all impediments by which . . . the . . . inquisitors are hindered in the exercise of their office . . . do hereby decree, by virtue of our apostolic authority, that it shall be permitted to the . . . inquisitors . . . to exercise their office of Inquisition and to proceed to the correction, imprisonment, and punishment of the aforesaid persons for their said offences and crime...

Pope Innocent VIII, "The Witch Bull." 1484

### Document 5

". . . sorcerers or witches are the Devil's whores who steal milk, raise storms, ride on goats or broomsticks, lame or maim people, torture babies in their cradles, change things into different shapes so that a human being seems to be a cow or an ox, and force people into love and immorality . . . not that the Devil is unable to do these things by himself without sorcerers, for he is lord of the world yet he will not act without human help."

Martin Luther, preaching in 1522

### Document 6

"Moreover, in order that we may be aroused and exhorted . . . Scripture makes known that there are not one, not two, nor a few foes, but great armies, which wage war against us. For Mary Magdalene is said to have been freed from seven demons by which she was possessed [Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2], and Christ bears witness that usually after a demon has once been cast out, if you make room for him again, he will . . . return to his empty possession [Matt. 12:43-45]. Indeed, a whole legion is said to have assailed one man [Luke 8:30]. We are therefore taught by these examples that we have to wage war against an infinite number of enemies....

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1536

### Document 7

The bodies of aged persons are impure, which, when they [become diseased with malice, they use their very breath and their sight, being apt for contagion, and by the Devil whetted for such purpose, to the vexation and destruction of others. For if they which are troubled with the disease of the eyes called ophthalmia do infect others that look earnestly upon them, is it any marvel that these wicked creatures, having both bodies and minds in a higher degree corrupted, should work both these and greater mischiefs?"

W. Fulbecke, "A Parallele or Conference of the Civil Law, the Canon Law and the Common Law", 16

**Document 8**

MALES AND FEMALES EXECUTED IN SOUTHWESTERN GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, AND SELECTED PARTS OF FRANCE		
AREA	MALES	FEMALES
Southwestern Germany	238 (18%)	1,050 (82%)
Switzerland & Selected Parts of France	305 (22%)	1,060 (78%)

From Alan Macfarland, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: a Regional & Comparative Study*, 1970

**Document 9**

OCCUPATIONS OF THE HUSBANDS OF THOSE ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT IN AN ENGLISH REGION, 1546-1680	
OCCUPATIONS OF HUSBANDS	NUMBER RECORDED, 1546-1680
Laborer	23
Farmer	11
Tailor	4
Yoeman	4
Mason	2
Sailor	2
Beer Brewer	1
Shoemaker	1
Weaver	1
Gentleman	0

From Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*, 1970

**Document 10**

AGE OF SUSPECTED WITCHES			
	DATES	SIZE OF SAMPLE	MEDIAN AGE
Basel	1609-1617	10	60 (1 under age 50)
Fribourg, Germany	1607-1683	9	60 (2 under age 50)
Geneva	1537-1662	95	60 (24 under 50)
Essex, England	1645	15	60 (2 under 50)
Deot of the Nord, Fr.	1542-1679	39	55 (14 under 50)

From H.C. Eric Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 15652-1684: the Social and Intellectual Foundation*, 1972

## 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Witch Hunts - DBQ

Reasons for persecution of individuals as witches	Supporting Doc #	Document information	Outside Information	Point of View